

19 September 1969

Effects of Flooding on North Vietnam's Rice Crop

1. Flooding in North Vietnam's delta in mid-August, brought on by heavy rains during the southwest monsoons (mid-May to mid-September), may have caused some damage to the tenth month rice crop. The effects should not be as great as last year, however, when August floods were exacerbated by a September tropical storm. The present outlook appears optimistic with the southwest monsoon ending and river levels reportedly receding. The possibility of a tropical storm in September still poses a potential threat to the rice crop.

2. Mid-August intelligence reports stated that the water levels of the Red River, Black River, and the Clear River (Song Lo) were the highest in several years. The swollen condition of these rivers apparently was caused by extremely high rainfall in the northwest portion of the country centering around Lao Cai, and in portions of South China that drain into the river basins of North Vietnam. August rainfall in Lao Cai was 10 inches above the 15 inch norm for the month. Rainfall in Hanoi and Haiphong during August, however, was actually below the monthly norm, tempering somewhat the effects of the flooding from upstream.

3. There has been little intelligence on the extent of damage to the tenth-month rice crop caused by the August flooding, but available information suggests that damage so far has been light. Transplanting of the tenth-month crop ideally should have been completed by mid-August before the floods hit the delta area. There were conflicting reports on the amounts of the crop that had been transplanted on time this year. Damage to the newly transplanted rice should not have been great, since the high water levels reached in mid-August receded gradually. Some re-transplanting reportedly has been necessary, but it does not appear to be anywhere near as extensive as last year. The tropical storm "Doris" that hit North Vietnam on 2 September, was centered primarily on the Panhandle south of the 19th parallel, and should not have had much affect on the main rice growing areas.

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NSA review completed